

**Memorandum of the Meeting
Regular Study Session/Meeting
Twenty-Seventh Town Council of Highland
Monday, August 17, 2015**

The regular study session of the Twenty-Seventh Town Council of the Town of Highland was convened at the regular place, the Highland Municipal, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana, in the plenary meeting chambers on **Monday, August 17, 2015** at the time of 7:10 o'clock p.m.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Mark A. Herak, Bernie Zemen, Dan Vassar and Konnie Kuiper were present. Councilor Steve Wagner was absent owing to an extended work commitment. A quorum was attained. The Clerk-Treasurer Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings.

Also present: Randy Bowman, Assistant Inspector for Electrical; Pete Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief; Pat Vassar, Assistant Metropolitan Police Chief; Deputy Commander John Banasiak; and Police Officer 1st Class Erich Swisher, President of the Donald Sheppard Memorial F.O.P. Lodge 122; Tom Brown, President and CEO of Brown Insurance Group, were present.

General Substance of Matters Discussed or Proposed

1. *Report on Several Insurance Policy Matters by Brown Insurance Group.* Mr. Thomas Brown, CIC, President and CEO of the Brown Insurance Group was present and offered a description of the Special Fire Department Liability Insurance, required by IC 36-8-12-6. It was noted that the Town Council approved its renewal at the plenary business meeting of August 10, 2015.

Mr. Brown noted that the Fire Chief was especially pleased with this plan, in that it provided for an Employees Assistance Program (E.A.P.), which is a provision that he had been hoping to obtain. This was included in the basic plan by the underwriter, Provident Insurance.

Mr. Brown also discussed the worker safety update and reviewed a report of workers compensation claims in the past year. Mr. Brown pointed out that there were a small number of employees that had five or more claims since 2007. He further noted that in a few cases in which there was a significant lag time between the incident and the reporting of the claim. It was noted that this is a local policy and not driven by the insurer.

The discussion included the procedure observed by the town when an incident occurs, including the reporting protocol. Mr. Brown noted that he could provide a Form Reports that comport "Best Practices." Mr. Brown would also survey some municipalities that have been identified as engaging in best practices in terms of policy and how it's executed, such as Noblesville.

Mr. Brown also reported that there have been some worker complaints with the current Occupational Health Facility. Following this report, Mr. Brown departed.

2. *Discussion of Lockbox Services for Utilities Bills.* The Town Council and the Clerk-Treasurer discussed the rationale and desirability of engaging this service as part of a strategic objective to make office work processes more efficient and effective. The Clerk-Treasurer noted the three goals of an already initiated strategic plan, including the causing the utility bills to be processed for all parts of town at the same time instead of the former mailing to two sections, with due dates of the 15th and the 30th each month. The second goal enlisting a mailing bureau that could take the electronic utility invoices and apply postal

service approved applications to produce mailings that were carrier route ready, and thereby earn the lowest cost postal rate. All of the those being achieved and operational for a time, the last of the three goals in support of the plan is to employ a lockbox service allowing customer payments to be mailed to a bank processing center. The banking center would take the payments and render an electronic file that would be returned, and populate the customer accounts in the current software. The current proposal from First Financial Bank was the product of a request for proposals with discussions to refine the metrics. The volume of daily mail and therefore daily deposits is significant, creating a significant demand on workflow and worker time with opening mail, counting receipts and then manually posting the cash to the proper accounts. The lockbox process eliminates many of these steps and allows for timely deposits and accounting using the operational capacity of the receiving bank. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that he was seeking Town Council approval pursuant to the purchasing code. The costs would be borne by the utilities. There was no objection to placing this before the Town Council for action at its meeting of August 24, 2015.

3. *Discuss using the Public Safety LOIT for a Requested Additional Appropriation to Support the Purchase of Furniture for the New Police Station.* The Clerk-Treasurer explained that the request for the additional appropriation was made by the Police Department to cover furniture that was eliminated from the capital financing by valued engineering in order to support the basic construction costs. It was noted that some of the existing furniture would be used in the new building. The police department already purchased cabinets from existing Cumulative Capital Development Fund appropriations, in the approximate amount of \$11,000. The Police Chief represented that the \$192,000 was an estimate and the entire sum would likely not be used.

The Clerk-Treasurer noted the original request was made for resources in the MCCD Fund. The Clerk-Treasurer noted there were adequate unassigned resources in the Public Safety Income Tax Fund. He suggested using these proceeds and would like to move forward with the notice for the hearing on the proposed additional appropriations. It was further noted that once approved, the authority to spend would be immediate and would not require a review and order from the Department of Local Government Finance if the spending was from the Public Safety Income Tax Fund. The MCCD Fund is a controlled fund, and would require the added delay. There was no objection to placing this on agenda for authorization by the Town Council.

4. *Presentation from and Discussion with the Donald Sheppard F.O.P. Memorial Lodge 122 regarding desired Salaries and Benefits for the Members of the Police Department.* Police Officer First Class Erich Swisher, President of the Memorial Lodge 122 offered a series of requests to be considered by the Town Council for FY 2016 affecting the members of the Metropolitan Police Department. He submitted the following:
 - It was requested that a general four percent (4%) increase for the salaries to the ranks of first class patrol officers and above be granted. It was suggested that the fourth, second and third class ranks remain unaffected. There was a concern about the wage difference for the higher ranks not being sufficiently high enough to encourage officers to seek promotions.
 - It was requested that a modification be made to the current longevity adjustment, which adds to the base pay of a police officer (and civil employee) a modest additional pay amount bi-weekly, at 4 years, 7 years, 10 years continuing to 22 years. It was noted that the current longevity adjustment at 22 years added \$1,200 to the annual base pay.

It was further requested that the longevity be redesigned around every five years, and that there be an added \$1,000 to the current amounts at least.

- It was requested that the Municipality contribute to the cost of retiree's health insurance at fifty percent (50%) of the premium. An alternative suggestion included perhaps covering one month of premiums for each year of service earned by a retiree.
- It was requested that the pay of the Special Patrol Officer First Class be increased by \$3,000 plus the general four percent (4%) being sought for all ranks at first class police officer and above. The Special Patrol Officer First Class is a special non-occupied rank that is used as the basis for fixing the pensions in the police department.
- It was requested to modify the salaries associated with the ranks of Corporal and Sergeant by \$1,500 each annually. This was to address a concern about the wage difference for the higher ranks not being sufficiently high enough to encourage officers to seek promotions.

The Town Council thanked the representatives from the police department for the presentation. No formal action was suggested.

5. *Discussion regarding Enacting General Increase for the special support services staff in the Police Department.* It was recalled that the Police Chief had advocated for an for additional pay increases to the positions in his staff styled generally under the rubric of Support Services Staff, according to an increase in wages and was recently instituted for most of the other full-time employees in the workforce. This was discussed during the *Study Session of July 20, 2015* in greater detail. Councilor Kuiper asked about the disposition of this request made by the Police Chief at that meeting.

The Police Chief stated his belief that he could cover the increases in the current budget without the need for an additional appropriation. He further suggested that he could cover the current year raises without the need for an additional appropriation. During the discussion, he noted that he would be seeking another full-time support services clerk position to replace Sergeant Towasnicki, who was previously performing these duties until he was assigned to a new detail or assignment supporting code enforcement.

The Clerk-Treasurer sought clarification, to determine whether the request that was being considered would be for 4.5% from the start of the year or would only be for the second increase of 2.25% from the effective date that the general increase had been authorized. It was clarified that the suggested increase would be for 2.25% from the June 21 date.

It was noted that the 2015 wage increase design authorizes a general increase to be effective January 4 of 2.25% and a second general increase of 2.25% beginning in the pay period beginning June 21, 2015, rendering a nominal 4.5%. There was an apparent consensus to act to grant the 2.25% increase to these workers. The Town Council was silent on the matter of the authorization of the additional full-time support services clerk position.

6. *Observations about Park Maintenance and Park Asset Use.* Councilor Vassar expressed concerns about the quality of maintenance at certain parks. He particularly noted the conditions at Hilltop Field at Homestead Park and the old major league little league fields. He encouraged members of the Council to visit the locations he mentioned and evaluate the conditions of maintenance about which he is concerned.

Councilor Vassar and the Town Council discussed the possibility of using the tennis courts at Sheppard Memorial Park for skating.

7. Councilor Vassar also noted that the standing meeting times for the Town Theatre Board of Directors is at 4:30 p.m., which owing to his work schedule precludes his attendance as a liaison. Councilor Vassar asked whether any other councilor was available to attend. He further suggested that if no councilor could attend, that the Redevelopment Director should be instructed to prepare a report for the Council regarding its activities.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, August 17, 2015**, was adjourned at 8:19 o'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/CPFIM/CMO
Clerk-Treasurer